

Colchester Board of Education Diversity, Equity and Inclusion ad hoc Committee

(DRAFT – working document. This document is meant to create awareness, brainstorm ideas and eventually develop goals)

Definition of Terms: (for the purpose of this Committee)

CPS Mission: We create innovative thinkers for a dynamic world.

Committee Purpose/Mission: To review and make recommendations to the Board of Education regarding the incorporation of Social Justice into best practice in the areas of budget, policy, personnel and curriculum. The Ad Hoc Committee will work cohesively with Colchester Public Schools and recognizes the Mission Statement developed by the **CPS Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee**:

Mission Statement: “The Colchester Public Schools Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee creates conditions that allow all students, staff and families to have a sense of belonging inclusive of race, ethnicity, culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion or disability to ensure educational equity.”

Diversity:

Diversity – an attribute of a given society that reflects the variety of difference expressed and sustained among the people and communities that compose that given society. The types of difference most commonly represented in a society are based on social identity markers that are considered “protected classes” by the CT General Statutes.

Diversity is the range of human differences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, social class, physical ability or attributes, or ethical values system and national origin.

Operationalize:

Create a diverse community while nurturing a supportive culture.

Training for CPS staff.

Representation - Content in curriculum

Students can see diversity in staff/role models. (Inclusion?)

School hiring and retention practices are deliberately focused on increasing diversity of the educator and the workforce.

Equity:

Equity (Social) - “The fair, just and equitable management of all institutions serving the public directly or by contract, and the fair and equitable distribution of public services, and implementation of public policy, [including laws pertaining to human rights,] and the commitment to promote fairness, justice, and equity in the formation of public policy... [Social equity is] the fourth pillar of public administration, along with economy, efficiency, and effectiveness.” - **National Academy of Public Administration (NAPA), 2005.** Discovering, bridging, and sealing the gaps between human rights law and the public

administration of that law while also correcting the deeper issues that open and widen these gaps. Identify shortcomings in current diversity and inclusion practices by organizing the development and enactment of clear and consistent policies of social equity.

Operationalize:

Board supports courageous conversations. The board supports teachers having complex discussions at age appropriate levels. “Belonging” - Do you feel like you belong at CPS?

Empower/train/provide framework for teachers to have courageous conversations - current events/perspectives

How to have the conversations without offending. Common Language/Courageous conversations - meeting people where they’re at. “Getting comfortable being uncomfortable”

Uncover root causes of disproportionality.

Invest in Student Ownership of Learning.

Review Equity Indices: Where is access a problem?

Eliminate barriers to student’s success.

Include equity as a foundation in Colchester Public School and Board of Education goals

Draft and adopt an “Equity Policy”, an equity statement.

Supporting student and staff Mental Health through a “Community of Wellness”:

Review Mental Health and Behavioral Supports for students (including “Positive Behavioral Supports”).

Assess methodology for “scoring” “grading” to ensure common standards and common rubrics. Assess grading system; promote a design to provide feedback to students so that they can take charge of their learning.

Develop a process to embody “Self Determination” practices.

Avoid sorting students into “levels”.

Student diversity is represented in advanced classes.

Students have many opportunities to meet with an advisor to craft their course selection, design extended learning opportunities and explore college or post-graduation plans.

All students are asked to engage in complex, rigorous work.

Utilize an “asset based” approach, helping students to see and build on their own academic and personal strengths.

Students have the opportunity to give teachers feedback on classroom culture, assignment, grading and other aspects of teaching practice. Structures also exist that enable community members to give feedback to the school and school staff.

School personnel are trained and are able to utilize “Trauma informed” practices.

School personnel are able trained and able to use the process of “Mediation” or “Restorative Practice” when conflicts occur or school discipline is triggered.

Efforts are made to maximize instructional time in the classroom vs suspension from class.

Inclusion:

Inclusion: Creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported and valued as a fully participating member.

To generate and amplify a spirit of inclusion by following, amplifying, centering, engaging and serving voices and cultures that are currently underrepresented or excluded. Creating an environment where everyone can feel safe and valued.

Operationalize:

Facilitating opportunities to learn about challenges to inclusivity and appropriate remedies to those challenges.

Create “Communities of Belonging”; Students and parents feel safe and valued.

Facilitate peer to peer support.

Develop clubs, publications, and extracurricular activities to provide opportunities for students to express their ideas and beliefs. Students are empowered to create new clubs when they see a need.

The School promotes student leadership by embedding leadership development in the curriculum and providing resources to help staff become youth allies. Marginalized students are represented in leadership structures, decision-making processes, and curriculum development.

The school partners with community organizations to provide opportunities for community-wide discussions of anti-racism and anti-bias.

Cultural Competence:

Cultural Competence: accepting and respecting diversity and differences in a continuous process of self-assessment and reflection of one’s personal and organizational perceptions of the dynamics of culture. (uslegal.com) A set of attitudes, behaviors and policies that combines knowledge about groups of people into practices and standards to improve the quality of services to all cultural groups that are served.

Operationalize:

life-long learning

self-reflection, humility being able to acknowledge

Assess to collect data regarding mitigating implicit bias. Utilize assessment tools/measures to determine baseline to monitor and gauge rates of implicit bias. Use this information to design training for Cultural Competence and Implicit Bias.

There is a commitment among school personnel and BOE to explore and discuss their own identities and the ways their identities have been impacted by privilege and bias.

Members of the school community have the training and ability to recognize and interrupt implicit and explicit prejudicial and harmful language or actions such as microaggressions or bullying of individuals and groups.

Develop or recruit essential DEI training for BOE.

Assist teachers with being able to talk to students about current events and modern “social issues”

Provide an opportunity for students to explore and question their own beliefs about race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental and physical ability.